QUERIES on the Affair of *E. C.*

ALLOWING the difficulties in *E. C.*'s account of her ſufferings their full weight, do not thoſe which attend the ſuppoſition of her being a cheat overbalance them? For,

Qu. 1. Have there not been inſtances enough known of young women ſpirited away by bawds and whoremaſters? Is there not, particularly, as black and complicated a crime of this kind laid to the charge of a nobleman of the laſt age, and univerſally believed; the ſtory of which was related ſome months ago in the *Free Enquirer*.*

2. Are there not on record in the tranſactions of the royal ſociety, and in authentic hiſtory, unqueſtionable inſtances of perſons faſting, or being ſuſtained with almoſt nothing, much longer than one month?

3. Is not an intermiſſion, a diminution, or inverſion of the periſtaltic motion of the bowels, and almoſt a total privation of many of the animal functions, and eſpecially of the natural evacuations, to be expected in the caſe of a perſon overpowered with fear, and deprived of ſuſtenance a long time?

4. Is it not eaſily conceivable, that the perſons, by whom E. C. pretends to have been confined, might think it the ſafeſt thing they could do, to leave her to herſelf, in the manner ſhe relates? Might they not expect, that hunger would in time bring her to a compliance? Might they not be afraid of attempting to force her, or to turn her out, after the uſage ſhe had received from them? Might they not conclude, that to attempt to prevail with her by any other means than thoſe they uſed, would only pique her pride, or virtue, and make her more obſtinate? And is not the poſſeſſion of one, ſuppoſed to be a virgin, and who has held out long, reckoned a prize among the cuſtomers of ſuch houſes, for which they will give any conſideration? Is it not therefore probable, all conſequences conſidered, that Mrs. W. and her aſſociates, would be the laſt perſons to think of favouring E. C.'s eſcape? And, as to her continuing in her confinement ſo long, and eſcaping ſo eaſily at laſt;

5. Is it not eaſy to conceive, that a timorous young creature, who found herſelf in the hands of perſons who appeared to her capable of any barbarity, might be ſo terrified, as not to be able to think of making her eſcape from a place of confinement, otherwiſe not ſufficient to reſtrain any perſon, who was not chained by fear? And yet, is it not alſo conceivable, that the ſame perſon might at laſt, ſeeing nothing, either way, but death before her, take a reſolution between hope and deſpair, and ſo make her eſcape?

6. Is her walking ten miles, in the emaciated condition ſhe was in, an impoſſibility? Are there no inſtances of perſons performing as wonderful actions, when flying from their enemies, and in fear of their lives?

7. Suppoſing E. C. to be a cheat, are we to believe her to be a perſon of ſagacity, or one of mean capacity? If ſhe is the former, how came ſhe to forge the ſtory of her ſufferings, in the manner ſhe did, if it was a forgery? What end was ſhe to gain by ſcandalizing a ſet of infamous people, and vagabonds? Would a perſon of common ſenſe have clogged a forgery, which ſhe had a month to put together, with a number of difficulties, which might have been left out of the ſcheme? Would not a perſon of ſagacity have invented a ſtory that was at leaſt plauſible? Why muſt ſhe be dragged almoſt a dozen miles? Why muſt ſhe have ſo very ſmall an allowance of bread and water? Why muſt the functions of nature be ſuſpended? Why muſt no creature come near her, or endeavour to prevail with her, by threatenings or ſollicitations, in ſo long a time? If, on the other hand, ſhe is a *fool*, how came ſhe to be capable of inventing a ſtory which has baffled the ſkill of the ableſt lawyers, men accuſtomed to ſearch into and unravel the ſchemes of the crafty, and has put the whole nation to a nonplus to confute her? Which is ſo far from being done, that it is notorious, ſhe has in both her trials drawn the opinion of the juries to her ſide. For that the firſt jury, who brought in the gypſey and Mrs. W. guilty, believed E. C.'s ſtory, hardly any one can doubt. And that, on her late trial, the jury did not find her a cheat, is equally clear. For their firſt ſpontaneous verdict acquitted her of all the guilt charged in the indictment; and with their ſecond they earneſtly recommended her to mercy; which they never would have done, had they judged her guilty of wilful perjury, to the taking away the life of a perſon who had never injured her. I ſay nothing of what has been declared by ſome of the jury ſince the trial, which ſhews, paſt all doubt, their favourable opinion of her.

8. Had E. C. been a cheat, how comes it, that ſo many collateral circumſtances ſhould concur to confirm her ſtory? That ſo many people ſhould, voluntarily, and unaſked, appear, to give teſtimony upon oath, in her favour? That the turnpike man ſhould ſee a woman dragged along the road, by two fellows, about the time of the night, and day of the month, in which ſhe pretends to have been in thoſe circumſtances? That ſeveral people ſhould ſee a perſon ſo remarkable in her appearance, and in ſuch circumſtances of diſtreſs, upon the road toward London, at the time ſhe pretends ſhe was on her return? That, though the life of a ſubject was at ſtake, and in immediate danger, I mean, that of the gypſey; no creature ſhould appear, and declare, that it was they, whom the turnpike man ſaw, or whom the other perſons met at the time of E. C's pretended return from her captivity; or that E. C. was to their knowledge in ſuch a place, during her pretended confinement? To be able to conjure up ſuch a number of amazing circumſtances in favour of a forgery, and that none of them ſhould prove evidently abſurd, or be afterwards confuted; muſt ſhe not poſſeſs an uncommon degree of ſagacity? And to invent a ſtory ſo liable to be cavilled at, muſt ſhe not have been a perfect idiot?

9. Is there not a conſiderable difference between the character of E. C. and thoſe of a bawd and a gypſey; a ſort of people, whoſe very profeſſions, generally ſpeaking, entitle them to the gallows? Had the gypſey happened to have been hanged, the conſequence would have been, that there had been in the nation one vagabond leſs. But if the unhappy E. C. is innocent, or, at worſt, has committed ſome miſtakes in her account of her ſufferings, which might very naturally happen, the primitive martyrs did not much more deſerve the commiſeration of all humane perſons, than one, whoſe cruel miſeries have been ſo ill redreſſed, or rather been aggravated by the very means, which ſhould have proved her redreſs.

10. Do not this, and the trial of Simmons the Jew, ſhew the neceſſity of making ſome regulations with reſpect to three points? the firſt, to reſtore human teſtimony to ſome degree of certainty, by putting judicial oaths under proper regulations: the ſecond, to redreſs the grievances to which juries are ſubject †: and the third, the putting ſuch effectual reſtraints upon idle vagrants, that there may not be a gypſey in the nation.

Theſe are a few reflections thrown together by one, who never ſaw E. C. nor is acquainted with any one of her protectors; and who defies all ſurmiſes of partiality, or attachment to any ſide, but that of truth, for which he has the higheſt regard.

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* See a remarkable ſtory of the late E. of Eſſex in Mr. Whiſton's Life, p. 272 to 278, 2d edition.

† Theſe are excellently ſet forth by Sollom Emlyn, Eſq; counſellor at law, in his judicious preface to Judge Hales's Reports.